

Topical Heading

Federal Student Aid

Program Title

Academic Competitiveness Grants and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants

Also Known as

SMART Grants

CFDA # (or ED #)

84.376

Administering Office

Federal Student Aid (FSA)

Who May Apply (by category)

Individuals

Who May Apply (specifically)

Undergraduate students enrolled or accepted for enrollment in participating schools may apply.

Type of Assistance (specifically)

Academic Competitiveness Grants and SMART Grants are direct grants awarded through participating institutions to students with financial need. Recipients must be eligible to receive a Pell Grant and meet other eligibility requirements related—depending on the recipient's year in school—to completing a rigorous high school curriculum; majoring in mathematics, science, or selected foreign languages; and maintaining a required minimum grade point average (GPA). Participating institutions either credit the grant funds to the student's school account, pay the student directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. (This program was created in the *Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2006*, effective July 1, 2006.)

Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2006 \$790,000,000

Note: FY 2006 is the first year of funding for this program.

Fiscal Year 2006 Awards Information

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Amount of Aid Available: \$789,950,000

Amount of Aid Available represents the amount of funds awarded to participants in the Federal Student Aid programs. Depending upon the program, this total may include federal appropriated dollars, institutional or state matching dollars, and federal or private loan capital.

Number of New Awards Anticipated: 535,000

Average New Award: \$1,447

Range of New Awards: \$750–\$4,000

Legislative Citation

Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 401A.

Program Regulations

Under development

Program Description

The Academic Competitiveness Grant and SMART Grant program was created by the *Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2006*; it will become effective July 1, 2006. The program awards need-based Academic Competitiveness Grants to first- and second-year undergraduates who completed a rigorous high school curriculum, and SMART Grants to third- and fourth-year undergraduates majoring in certain technical fields or foreign languages deemed vital to national security.

In order to be eligible for either grant, a student must be a United States citizen, enrolled full time, and eligible for a Federal Pell Grant. (See Federal Pell Grant Program, # 84.063, for information on the process for applying for and being deemed eligible for a Pell Grant is described under the section for that program.) A first-year undergraduate is also required to be a first-time undergraduate, to be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a two- or four-year degree-granting institution, and to have completed, after Jan. 1, 2006, a rigorous secondary school program. A second-year undergraduate at such an institution is required to have completed such a rigorous program after Jan. 1, 2005, and to have obtained a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in the first academic year as an undergraduate.

Third- and fourth-year undergraduates are required to pursue a major in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering or a critical foreign language, and to obtain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in the coursework required for the major being pursued. Critical foreign languages will be determined by the secretary of education in consultation with the director of national intelligence.

Grant amounts are \$750 to first-year undergraduate students, \$1,300 for a second-year undergraduate, and \$4,000 for third- and fourth-year undergraduates, except that these grants, in combination with the Federal Pell Grant and other student financial assistance cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance. A student may only receive one grant for each of the first through fourth years of undergraduate education and only for a year for which the student received credit after the date of enactment of the program.

Education Level (by category)

Postsecondary

Education Level (specifically)

Undergraduate degree-seeking

Subject Index

Grants, Low Income, Student Financial Aid

Contact Information

Name: Federal Student Aid Information Center

Toll Free Telephone: (800) 433-3243 or (800) 4FED-AID

Links to Related Web Sites

<http://ifap.ed.gov>